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Faculty Recital: Walking with My Ancestors, October 24, 2015

Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum Playwright/Composer/Choreographer

Kim Pereira Director

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Thinking about shackled able-bodied Africans lingering in darkness. Waiting. Gaps!! Cry-y-y-y-y-y....

We continue to relive the experiences at Elmina Castle. Families torn. Incarceration. Policing black bodies. Single mothers. Orphans. Emptiness inside. Gaps. By disrupting our understanding of the status quo and giving voice to previously unheard narratives, a most important but neglected past that still defines who we are and how we interact with each other, *Walking With My Ancestors* offers important perspective on slavery in its connection to today's racial problems

In the aftermaths of Charleston, Ferguson, and Baltimore, *Walking With My Ancestors* compels us to deepen dialogue and engagement needed to address racial violence, and encourages us to rethink how much has changed, or not, in race relations/policies, and helping us to move towards healing. Who we are, our shared past, and our responsibility for each other resonate in this project. *Ati deka metuna xɔ o*—"One stick cannot build a house."

Ghanaians say, *Twene da hɔ a yɛ nbɔ nkɔɛn...* "You don't play the side of a drum when it has a drumhead." Therefore, with African oratory skills, griot style, and candor, the play is direct—weaving proverbs and storytelling.

Walking With My Ancestors is about the experiences of the forgotten Africans who lingered and died in the dungeons before crossing the Great Atlantic, *Nana Bosompo*.

Please *listen* to their story. *Listen* to the pain and moans.

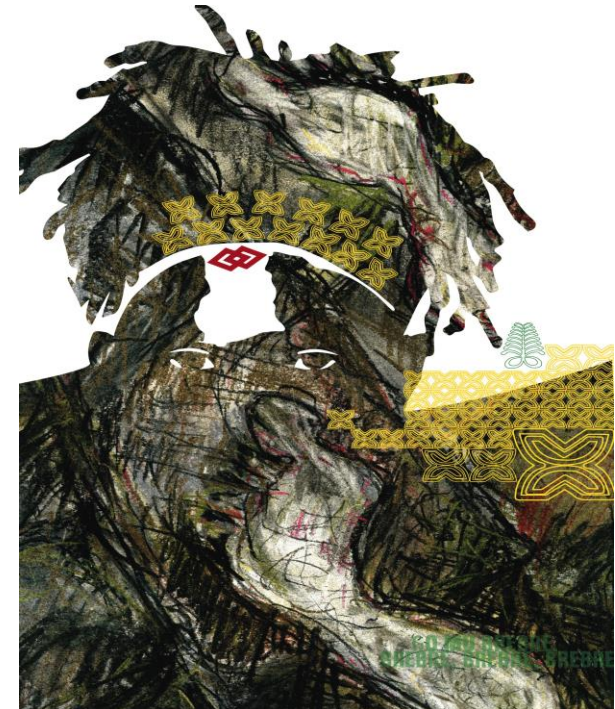
Join us as we Walk with the Ancestors, Connect with their greatness and resilience, Thank them, and Lay their restless souls to rest. Help us to declare: "Forgive Us! Thank You! Rest in Peace!" *Damirifua Due. Due ne Amanehunu! Ye sre Nyame ma mo. Otweadeampɔn nhyira mo. Mo nnante yie. Mo nnante nkuma nkuma. Gò mu brebre, brebre, brebre, brebre, brebre, Brebre, Brebre, Brebre. Brebre....*

Illinois State University
College of Fine Arts
School of Music

Charles W. Bolen Faculty Recital Series

Walking With My Ancestors:

Empowering Creativity, Deepening Dialogue, Engaging Community



Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum, Playwright/Composer/Choreographer
Kim Pereira, Director

Kemp Recital Hall
Saturday, October 24, 2015 at 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, October 25, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

This is the thirty-eighth program of the 2015-2016 season.

Program

Please turn off electronic devices for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

I *Walking With my Ancestors* (2014) Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum

II A Talk Back

III Audience Participation



Walking With My Ancestors

By Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum

Cast (in alphabetical order)

Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum (Endurance)	Ancestral Spirit, Door of No Return, Descendant
Leola Bellamy (Healer)	Ancestral Spirit, Women's Dungeon, Descendant
Fania Bourn (Love and Compassion)	Ancestral Spirit, Door of No Return, Descendant
John Bowen (Governor)	Ancestral Spirit, Elmina Castle, Branding Iron, Descendant
Jajwanica Johnson (Hope)	Ancestral Spirit, Door of No Return, Hope, Descendant
Tereva Parham (Faith)	Ancestral Spirit, Door of No Return, Descendant
Claron Sharrieff (Peace)	Ancestral Spirit, Door of No Return, Descendant

Understudy: Jennifer Rusk

Composer and Musician: Dr. Kwasi Aduonum

The Production Staff

Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum, Playwright and Choreographer
Kim Pereira, Director

Karla Bailey-Smith, Set Designer
China Hawkins, Costume Designer
Rachel Hettrick, Stage Manager, Technical Director
Archana Shekara, Graphic Artist

Special Thanks

School of Music, MECCPACC, Oh! Nii, Paul Ankomah,

Musical Selections

Illinois Drum Call	Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum
The Doors of No Return	Dr. Kwasi Aduonum
<i>Abibiman Abwe ase</i>	Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum
<i>Edna Banyiwa</i>	Elmina Town Traditional Song
<i>Kekere Kekere</i>	Oh! Nii Sowah
Elmina Castle	Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum
African Woman	Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum
I Want Free	Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum
<i>Tuu Tuu Gbovi</i>	Ghanaian Ewe Lullaby
<i>Ogya ee Ogya ee</i>	Ghanaian Fante Warrior Song
Healing Song	Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum
<i>Asomdwoe Mu</i>	Dr. Ephraim Ama

Co-Sponsors

ISU School of Music, MECCPACC

PLAYWRIGHTS'S NOTE

About the play

Walking With My Ancestors is an original play based on my research and professional/personal experiences as a Ghanaian woman. The research was conducted at former slave-holding dungeons—the tombs and wombs in which proud Africans were buried and reborn as slaves—at Elmina, Ghana.

The play grew out of the interest and need to educate because people of all nationalities are unaware that before shipment to plantations in the Americas, captured Africans were imprisoned for months in dungeons. Helping us to reflect on the history,

the loss, and human suffering associated with that history, and transforming those experiences into positive power, action, healing.

I sat in the dungeons. Condemn cell, door of no return, branding room, women's dungeon, men's feeding hole. Black-green, algae-covered walls. Cool bumpy damp floors. Humid. Stench. Headache. Nauseous. I closed my eyes and listened. Silence. Ocean moaning. Spirits wailing. Waves lapping. Reflecting. Imagining: menstruating women; miscarried babies, bones lying alone on ocean floor; recipes gliding on currents.